

# **Your Bill of Rights**

**A Collection of Rights for Youth in Care**

The graphic features a central dark blue rectangle with white text and star borders, flanked by red and white vertical stripes. Silhouettes of a young man and woman are positioned on either side of the central rectangle. The text lists various rights categories, each preceded by a horizontal line of stars.

**SAFETY**

**FAMILY**

**PLACEMENT**

**HEALTH &  
WELL-BEING**

**CASE DETAILS**

**IDENTITY &  
FREEDOMS**

**INFORMATION &  
AWARENESS**

**PRIVACY**

**EDUCATION**

**FINANCES**

**COURT PROCEEDINGS**

## **Acknowledgements**

NRCYD would like to express a sincere thank you and appreciation for the information and input on foster care Bill of Rights provided by State staff and young people from across the nation. States and jurisdictions that participated in this project were: Arizona, the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington.

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**NRCYD**

**National Resource Center  
for Youth Development**

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## **Preface**

Do young people in care have a voice in your State? Many States understand that youth who are being provided services through the foster care system may not always feel like they are being heard. One way to encourage an open dialogue with young people is to create a Bill of Rights for youth in care.

With the intention of trying to elevate youth voice and further engage young leaders in discussions with care providers and program administrators, the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD) began to gather information from States regarding whether or not they had a Bill of Rights for youth and young adults in their foster care systems. Upon collection of the data through technical assistance with jurisdictions, NRCYD began to categorize the information and come up with items that were commonly included in States' Bills of Rights for youth and young adults in foster care.

The resulting document highlights eleven rights categories, each with multiple considerations and relevant applications as identified for and, in some cases, by young people in foster care. This resource includes both information from Bills of Rights developed by the States, and material from Bills of Rights developed by youth advisory boards. To prevent duplication and to present all the selected statements in the same format, some of the specific wording has been adjusted, however, NRCYD believes that the intent of each statement has not changed. Understanding that each State may approach the services and supports of foster care with a slightly different lens, content that was specific to any individual State has been removed or generalized.

It is the hope of NRCYD that this resource can have many uses for anyone working with youth and young adults in foster care. The entire document could be utilized by a State that is currently developing a Bill of Rights for the youth in foster care, or by States that are in the process of updating an existing Bill of Rights document. The information in this document can be used together in its entirety or section-by-section as needed. Ideally, this resource is as flexible as States and youth boards need it to be.

## **Your Bill of Rights: A Collection of Rights for Youth in Care**

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# Table of Contents

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## **PREFACE**

## **SAFETY ..... 1**

## **FAMILY ..... 2**

## **PLACEMENT ..... 3**

## **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ..... 4**

## **CASE DETAILS ..... 6**

## **IDENTITY AND FREEDOMS ..... 7**

## **INFORMATION AND AWARENESS ..... 9**

## **PRIVACY ..... 10**

## **EDUCATION ..... 11**

## **FINANCES ..... 12**

## **COURT PROCEEDINGS ..... 13**

## Addendum

## **Notes Pages..... 14-16**

## **Worksheet 1:What Are Your Rights?..... 17**

## **Worksheet 2: Where Rights and Limitations Meet..... 18**

## **Worksheet 3: Action Plan for Working with Youth ..... 19** **and Young Adults to Create a Bill of Rights**

## **Your Bill of Rights: A Collection of Rights for Youth in Care**

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# **SAFETY**

One category that was almost ubiquitous in its inclusion in a State Bill of Rights for young people in foster care was the issue of safety. Hands down, youth in foster care have the right to feel safe. While each State had a unique way of addressing the area of safety, many of the fundamental concepts were the same across the States. This inclusion of safety is encouraging both from the perspective of how important it is as a tenant of healthy development and additionally because it is identified as an outcome for youth in care in the child welfare legislative governance under the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Furthermore, safety is categorized as a fundamental basic human need described by Abraham Maslow in his *Hierarchy of Basic Needs* (1943, 1954). Safety forms the second step on the base of the pyramid; it is what we seek once our physical needs (food, water, shelter) are met. Feeling safe is defined on an individual basis and includes physical, cognitive, and psycho-social dimensions. Each youth and young adult in care will have their own unique idea of what it means for them to feel and be safe. For some young people, feeling safe might have to do with how predictable their environments and caretakers are. For others, safety might include being able to take a walk or have some privacy when they are upset. Many people identify safety issues around personal boundaries with touch and hygiene. Look at some examples of what States say about safety rights.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Have one's basic needs met: food, clothing, shelter, and education
- To have daily access to adequate food, shelter, clothing, and hygienic resources
- Be protected from physical, emotional, mental, verbal, and sexual abuse and neglect (including spiritual)
- Be free from cruel, frightening, or unsafe discipline as well as corporal punishment such as spanking or hitting
- Not be locked in any room, physically restrained, or isolated
- One's own bed while in care
- Not to have to share a room with an adult(s)
- No more than 3 people per bedroom
- Not sleep in any unfinished attic or basement
- Report abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violation of personal rights without fear of punishment, interference, or coercion
- Have a professional investigation of one's risk of harm
- Have a plan for one's safety and the safety of others
- To protect personal space and privacy in any placement when doing so does not threaten the personal safety and well-being of caregiver(s), others, or one's self
- Be notified of changes that affect one's permanence, safety, stability, or well-being
- Live with a family and/or in a setting that provides a safe and nurturing environment while supporting permanency and well-being, including encouraging one's goals, interests, and social/school related activities

# **FAMILY**

One of the most important parts of life for most people, youth and young adults in foster care included, is family. Not limited to just parents, family includes both those individuals to whom we are biologically related and those with whom we choose to be connected. It is exceptionally important to nurture the relationships in the lives of youth and young adults as those connections are the building blocks of permanency. Furthermore, we know that when youth and young adults leave care, often times they return to or, at least attempt to reconnect with their families including but not limited to siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, even cousins. In fact, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data from 2012 indicates the case plan goal for 53% of youth in care is to reunify with parent(s) or principal caretaker(s), and to live with other relatives is the goal for 3% of cases. Some youth and young adults in care are also parents and their description of family likely includes their children. Below are some examples of what States identified as rights for youth in care regarding family issues.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Receive preventative services as needed to enable one to stay with his/her family
- Have family/relatives explored first as potential placements or care providers
- Be placed with one's siblings who are in custody unless contrary to one's safety/well-being
- Be placed with one's own child if parenting unless otherwise determined by the court
- Be informed about and involved with one's birth family
- Receive help in reconnecting with one's birth family
- To maintain or develop healthy relationships with siblings, biological family, and extended kin while in care
- Appropriate visit/contact with any family members, pets, or even friends/other important people (including the ability to refuse), unless otherwise ordered by the court
- Actively participate in the care of one's children by having appropriate visitation when one doesn't have physical custody
- Raise and make decisions for one's children if pregnant or parenting, as any other citizen does
- To have support and assistance in building relationships with relatives, foster parents, and others that could lead to legal permanence or life-long connections



# PLACEMENT

Youth in foster care face an issue unusual to most youth growing up, in that they have a “placement.” What that placement looks like may vary greatly and can include different kinds of residential facilities, group homes, and foster homes. Sometimes the placement setting can be living on their own in an apartment. In 2010; the average number of placement changes for youth in foster care across the nation was 3.1 however, many youth and young adults in care experience placement changes, disruptions, and transitions in double-digit numbers. AFCARS data from 2012 indicates that of almost 400,000 individuals in care, 47% are placed in non-relative foster family homes, 28% in relative foster family homes, 15% in institutions and group homes, 6% in trial reunification home visits, 4% in pre-adoptive homes, 1% in supervised independent living settings, and another 1% on runaway status (*Child Welfare Information Gateway, Foster Care Statistics 2012 Fact Sheet, 11/2013*).

With that kind of instability surrounding where youth live, keeping track of personal belongings can be challenging and the possibility of losing items becomes greater. There are numerous contributing factors to why youth and young adults in care may not have a lot of personal property. Sometimes due to the frequency of placement transitions, other times due to what they came in with, the few items youth and young adults in care have will likely be very important to them. Ensuring youth feel comfortable that they can maintain possession or control over their belongings can be significant. The following examples are what States say about placement rights.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Be placed in the most family-like and least restrictive setting available that can meet one’s needs, with reasonable protection from harm and appropriate privacy for personal needs
- Be placed in a home where the providers or caregivers are aware of and understand one’s history, needs, and risk factors as well as informing the youth on what is expected of him/her
- Be provided with information about a family or program and, whenever possible, given the opportunity to meet the family or program staff before placement occurs
- Have caregivers who are screened, trained, licensed, and who receive adequate support and supervision from the state and/or other private agencies
- Be free of repeated or frequent changes in placement, with exceptions of possible danger
- Not live in a shelter, unless necessary and for short time periods
- Permanency
- Placed in one’s home community (or close to) whenever possible
- Have all of one’s personal belongings secure and transported with him/her
- Have one’s property kept safe where one lives
- To be treated, and to have personal belongings treated, with dignity and respect when moving from one placement to another

## **HEALTH and WELL-BEING**

Youth in child welfare systems undoubtedly will need access to health care services with as much, if not more, frequency as other youth and young adults within intact families. For that reason, ensuring that certain services are provided to youth, or ensuring that youth have access to certain information regarding their health and well-being is extremely important. Whether it is access to information or input regarding medication, therapeutic services, and/or reproductive health decisions, youth need to understand that they have rights to varying levels of involvement. Information from the *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth* (Courtney, M. et al, 2011) and other studies, have helped us recognize that youth and young adults who “age out” of care often times face many challenges transitioning into independent living. Of the approximately 30,000 young people who “age out” of the child welfare system annually, statistics show that 25% will become homeless, 56% are unemployed, and 27% of males will become incarcerated. States are concerned about these issues and many have moved forward with providing services and opportunities for young people to participate in extended care beyond their 18th birthday. Furthermore, information on promotive and protective factors, such as the Search Institutes *40 Developmental Assets*, is becoming more widely known and utilized as considerations in one’s service plan so that attention is given to the overall health and wellness of each individual. The following statements are some examples of what States describe as rights related to health and well-being.

### **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Have adequate and appropriate clothing, shelter, and nutritious food
- Be taught how to take care of one’s personal hygiene and grooming
- Receive medical coverage through state health insurance
- Consent to one’s own health care if of legal age
- Obtain health screening upon entering state’s care as well as annual well-check exams
- Have options and choose when considering the treatment provider that is being assigned to him/her
- Receive appropriate and prompt medical care which includes seeing a doctor, dentist, optometrist, or mental/behavioral health provider regularly or as needed
- See and understand his/her treatment plan(s) and medication (including possible risks of taking or refusing said treatment or medication) and be informed about/have a voice in decisions being made
- Not take psychotropic medications unless it meets all requirements of state law
- Refuse any or all medications, vitamins, or herbs unless a medical professional says one must take them
- Obtain or refuse birth control and/or counseling regarding reproductive health issues including STI/HIV testing and treatment and pregnancy matters
- Consent on one’s own medical care if one has been pregnant
- Receive help in overcoming deprivation or whatever distortion found in one’s emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual growth that may have resulted from one’s early experiences

- Get necessary medical, mental health, or drug treatment, but free of excessive medication, as well as the information on who to call if one has a disability and needs help
- Visit with people who are important to him/her while receiving treatment
- Access information (including copies upon exiting state care) contained in medical, dental, and educational records held by the state as well as personal documents such as a social security card, birth certificate, green card, etc.
- Receive care and services that are fair, respectful, safe, confidential, and free from discrimination
- To have as much assistance as is needed and/desired in developing relationships and resources for support during and after foster care.
- Help with identifying and developing mentoring and life-long supportive relationships.
- Have social contacts with people outside of the foster care system such as: church members, friends, school employees, and coaches
- To honest conversations about changes in or the end of key relationships, including those with biological and foster families, GAL, social worker, mentor, and others

## **CASE DETAILS**

All youth and young adults engaged in the child welfare system have a case file that contains sensitive and personal information as well as details regarding services and opportunities that the young person and/or their family may have had access to. The case file is a living document that gets information from case workers, court personnel, care providers, family members, medical professionals, teachers, counselors, and in some situations, youth themselves. Unfortunately, sometimes that case file is introduced to others before the young person is, i.e. in a transition or other new setting, people providing care or services know information about the case or what has happened to the young person precipitating their involvement in the child welfare system prior to ever meeting or talking with that person themselves. It is natural that impressions will be formed and those impressions can and do impact the nature of the dynamic between the young person and those involved in their case. Therefore, it is crucial that youth and young adults in care are communicated with and informed about what is written in the case files and what the plans are for their case outcome. Communication and making sure youth feel comfortable are essential to establishing positive relationships. The more engaged in the process young people feel the better able they will be to contribute and participate in their case planning and further their personal development. Below are some examples of what States say about the rights of youth as related to case details.

### **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Participate in the development and review of the service plan including input regarding changes that affect permanence, safety, stability, or well-being
- Be involved in court hearings, treatment, transition, and visitation plans and receive factual and timely information about decisions made by the department that affect one's life
- Have family members or other supportive people of one's choice present at team meeting and school functions, and be involved in therapeutic services if appropriate
- Have monthly visits (at a minimum) with one's case worker including private time just between one and his/her case worker and have phone calls returned in a timely manner
- Develop and have a permanency goal/plan for placement that reflects one's best interest and is designed to facilitate one's return home or other appropriate permanent placement in a timely manner as well as request a placement change
- A transition plan that includes career planning/preparation and help with post-secondary enrollment
- Offered services to help one prepare to become a successful adult
- Be informed about any changes in one's case plan or placement (in advance)
- Have the knowledge, ability, and reasonable access to confidentially or openly contact case workers, attorneys, probation officers, CASAs, or anyone else involved in one's case or who can make decisions on one's behalf including work related phone numbers and email addresses for said people and their supervisors
- Make a formal/written complaint about services received (or not received) from a service provider, if dissatisfied

# **IDENTITY and FREEDOMS**

Adolescence is a period of growth. Cognitive, physical, and psycho-social development are all taking place simultaneously. More and more we are learning about how important adolescent brain development is and that the brain continues to develop well into one's 20s. Research has provided information on the detrimental impacts of toxic stress and trauma as well as information on brain plasticity and the impact healthy relationships can have in healing and furthering growth. During this phase of increased development is also when young people begin to experience a need for autonomy and an interest in developing their individual identity. Young people are considering what they identify with, who they want to be, how they want to live, and what they want to do and/or contribute to their world. One of the challenges inherent in the system is in creating settings and experiences for individuals to experience "normalcy" while they are in a custodial relationship with the State. For example, if a young person wanted to cut or dye their hair, get a piercing, or spend the night at a friend's house, who needs to be involved in making those decisions? For young people living in intact family settings, these choices are often made by the individual and their families. For youth and young adults in care, oftentimes, these questions become far more complicated and involve a number of people. State child welfare administrators and workers, advocacy organizations, and especially vocal young leaders are raising these questions to elevate dialogue around how systems and providers can be responsive to young people regarding their need for independence and the opportunity to feel like they are their own persons through developing a sense of self. See what States have to say about rights related to identity and freedoms for youth and young adults in care.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Receive care and services and be treated with respect without regard to race, color, national origin, gender (identity or expression), sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, ethnicity, ancestry, or foster care status
- Receive, add to, and keep a "life book" that is started upon entering care
- To express personal beliefs, customs, and values
- Have the right to have caregiver(s) listen to and respect individual beliefs, customs, and values
- Participate in (and be encouraged to do so), cultural, spiritual, and personal enrichment activities that one enjoys, consistent with his/her age or developmental level, and should have access to transportation, if realistic, for these activities
- Practice or not practice any religion
- Live somewhere that provides the amount of direction and help one needs and allows them the freedom to do normal activities
- Receive care, affection, supervision, discipline, as well as be taught to act responsibly and respect the rights of others
- Be disciplined in a manner that makes sense for him/her, allows one to understand when a behavior is not acceptable and gives one a chance to change that behavior in a good way
- Be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
- Advocate for oneself and speak to persons involved with one's case without negative repercussions

- Be respected, nurtured, and given the ability to attend activities in accordance with one's background, religious heritage, race, and culture within reasonable guidelines or as set by the court
- Have a permanent home and family
- Participate in decision making about one's life; one's opinions and preferences must be considered by the department and court
- One's own identity, values, and freedom to express one's emotions, hopes, plans, goals, and religion/spirituality
- Learn about one's sexuality in a safe and supportive environment
- Continue relationships when he/she exits care with significant individuals who've helped him/her while in care such as teachers, friends, relatives, and other supports
- Work or receive training if authorized by the case worker
- Be treated as a unique, normal, and important human being
- Request the support and services that one needs
- Individualized care and attention based on one's unique skills and goals
- Have caretakers who are interested in them and will support their involvement in school and social activities
- Be treated as a family member and be included in a foster family's activities, holidays, and rituals whenever possible and be able to freely discuss reasons with caregivers/workers if choosing not to
- Have nurturing and capable foster parents who are provided support and training in order to enable one to reach his/her full potential
- Grow in/trust in oneself and others
- Grow up with freedom and dignity in a neighborhood of people who accept one with understanding, respect, and friendship

## **INFORMATION and AWARENESS**

Information is power. One of the main things that youth and young adults who have experienced care almost universally say to describe their experience of being in the system, is a sense of powerlessness. Many young people feel like they do not have input into a majority of the decisions made on their behalf, believe they are not informed about how their individual case is progressing, nor are they made aware of when placement transitions will happen. Just knowing about options or potential changes can provide a level of comfort that will help insulate young people from the stress and anxiety inherent in out of home placement. For example, information about when a transition might happen is extremely helpful and allows an individual time to prepare for it and process how they feel about it. Given the number of third parties that are involved with a young person in care, it is also important to be cognizant of who has access to information, for the protection of all involved. Young people should always be made aware of what is happening in their case and how they can be involved. Below are some examples of what States identified as information and awareness rights for youth.

### **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Be informed of individual rights in foster care by one's caseworker and receive a list of them in written form
- Be informed (at an age/developmentally appropriate level) of the reasons the state became involved with one's family and/or why one is in care, be told why contact is monitored if applicable as well as what will happen to one and his/her family
- Receive sensitive, continuing help in understanding and accepting the reasons for one's family's inability to care for him/her and developing confidence in one's self-worth
- Complete information and direct answers to one's questions about choices, services, and decisions
- Access one's records to help one meet his/her goals
- Be told about all meetings, reviews, and hearings, so that one can participate or have input in matters concerning one's life
- Control the release of records of substance use treatment and testing/treatment for STIs or HIV
- Be informed what the state provides to caregivers for youth in placement
- Know what is expected of one in his/her foster care placement
- Be provided an opportunity to complete an identification kit which can include one's photo and other identifying details one would like to include that will be kept in one's file by the child welfare agency
- Assistance getting identifying documents while in care and receive all personal documents, case/health records, and other personal information within 30 days of exiting care
- Have access to information on all resources available from the state and other service providers, including extended care

# PRIVACY

Akin to much of what is discussed regarding case details, placement, identity and freedoms, and information and awareness, youth and young adults in care are in a unique situation where many people, often unknown to them, are making decisions about their care, services, and the opportunities they have access to. That dynamic highlights the importance of being aware of the need for privacy that each person undoubtedly has. Furthermore, because of the nature of what has transpired in the lives of those participating in care, several States recognize that youth and young adults in care, deserve privacy protection and consideration of their feelings during stressful periods and transitions. This includes rights dealing with personal belongings as well as who is made aware that they are in foster care. Below are some examples of what States say in regard to rights of privacy.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Not be identified as a foster child to other students by any school employee
- Have/keep one's personal and family records and information kept private with exception of the people who need it in order to take care of him/her
- Have one's privacy protected and one's right to confidentiality adhered to as outlined in state law
- Be free from unreasonable searches of one's personal belongings or other invasions of one's privacy
- Have privacy in relation to one's personal journal/diary, mail, email, phone calls, or other belongings except in cases that there is just cause in supervising one to prevent self-harm or harm to others
- Initiate and receive private phone calls and unopened mail/email unless otherwise stated by the court
- Access to personal property, space, and privacy with allowance for safety



## **EDUCATION**

Engagement in the education system is not just about what happens in the classroom. For many young people it is also about the benefits of interacting with peers through extracurricular activities and social events. Research indicates youth who have experienced care are 60% more likely to experience developmental delays than their peers living in intact family settings. Youth in care are 2x more likely to be absent from school than their peers (*Fostering Success in Education: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care*, January 2014). Frequent placement changes often times leads to school transitions as well. We know that with each new educational setting youth experience a setback and catch up period that is similar to a six week long absence. Just 50% of youth in foster care complete high school by age 18, only about 20% of foster youth who graduate from high school attend college, and less than 10% of former foster youth attain a bachelor's degree (*Fostering Success in Education: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care*, January 2014). Ensuring that youth understand how they can interact with their community and the benefits of staying in school is crucial for positive development. Below are examples of what States identified as education rights of youth in their care.

### **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Attend/complete education (even if one is pregnant or parenting) and participate in extracurricular, personal, cultural, or spiritual activities consistent with one's age and development as negotiated with one's care provider
- Receive blanket consent for participation in school activities if available
- Attend the school (and extracurricular activities) that one is enrolled in before entering state's care if it is realistic and in one's best interest
- Have one's educational records transferred quickly when attending a new school
- Request copies of one's records/transcript and stay informed on credits/progress
- Attend and participate in school meetings including parent/teacher conferences, IEP meetings, and next steps planning
- Attend community, school, and religious activities of one's choice and receive an education that is best fitted to one's wants/needs
- Receive assistance in acquiring life skills, education, training, and career guidance to accomplish personal goals, prepare for the future and attain a useful/satisfying life as well as to be informed of the post-secondary educational and employment supports available to youth in care through the state
- Receive preparation for citizenship and parenthood through interactions with foster parents and other adults who are consistent role models
- Get an education equal to what any other resident/citizen deserves as well as help if needed
- Participate in extended foster care to obtain one's high school diploma or GED after reaching age 18, until 21 years old
- Be informed about post-secondary prospects before exiting care

# FINANCES

As youth begin to transition into young adulthood, being prepared to handle finances becomes extremely important. The findings of the *Midwest Evaluation on the Adult-Functioning of Former Foster Youth* (Courtney, M. et. Al 2011) indicate that young people who have exited from foster care fare worse than their counterparts in the general population. In terms of self-sufficiency outcomes, former foster youth have a lower level of educational attainment, a higher level of unemployment, and a lower level of annual earnings. The study also showed that former foster youth experienced a higher number of economic hardships (not having enough money to pay rent and/or utility bills, having utilities shut off, being evicted, etc.) and accumulated fewer assets than youth who were not in foster care. Financial empowerment and independence requires that young people have access to financial education and have some autonomy in relationship to earning, saving, and managing their own money, so that those skills can begin to develop before they exit care. See how States discuss youth rights as related to finances below.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Earn and keep one's own money
- Receive guidance in managing resources to prepare one for living independently
- Open and maintain a bank account
- Be informed how money that is being held by the department is being used
- Ask that one's money be saved for future uses or used for specific things

# **COURT PROCEEDINGS**

Another relationship unique to youth in care is their relationship with the legal system. Youth in foster care have access to the benefits of a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) to represent them on their behalf, a judge who makes decisions about various factors of their stay in care, and in some cases, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) who also works to ensure all the decisions made are in the best interests of the young person. There are many factors that contribute to a determination regarding how involved in the actual court proceedings an individual young person can and should be. Some youth and young adults ask to be present while others indicate that the court process is difficult, re-traumatizing, and feels like punishment. If they are interested in participating, every effort should be made to help facilitate a young person's involvement in court proceedings. The following are some examples of what States say about youth rights in relationship to court proceedings.

## **Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care Have the Right to:**

- Discuss one's views about his/her planning with the court
- Access and review one's case file with his/her attorney
- Be informed of the names, contact information of one's assigned attorneys or other advocates, the ability to contact said attorneys/advocates and be aware of the process to request a change of attorney/advocates
- Have contact information for attorney and/or advocate and speak with them privately if needed
- Meet with legal representatives before and after a court hearing
- Participate and be included in court hearing/decisions as well as speak to the judge directly about one's accomplishments, problems, and requests
- Be included in reviews and hearings if at least 12 years old, unless court decides involvement would be detrimental to the youth; can submit a written statement to be considered and hear what happened if unable to attend
- Have someone appointed to represent one's best interest in his/her dependency case, such as a GAL, CASA or attorney with the possibility of the court appointing a "suitable person" to act as a GAL if one isn't available
- Be represented by an attorney in the administrative or judicial proceedings that are specific to their placement in care and to have access to fair hearings and court review of decisions (when related to one's case), so that one's interests are safeguarded
- Call witnesses, present evidence, and/or ask questions of people who speak about him/her in court
- Have one's case reviewed in court once every 6 months
- Request a court hearing to decide whether or not one can consent to his/her own medical care
- Be accorded the least restrictive legal status that is consistent with one's need for protection
- Have family members or other supportive people of one's choice present at court hearings

[illegible]

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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# **Worksheet 1: What Are Your Rights?**

## **List Your Rights**

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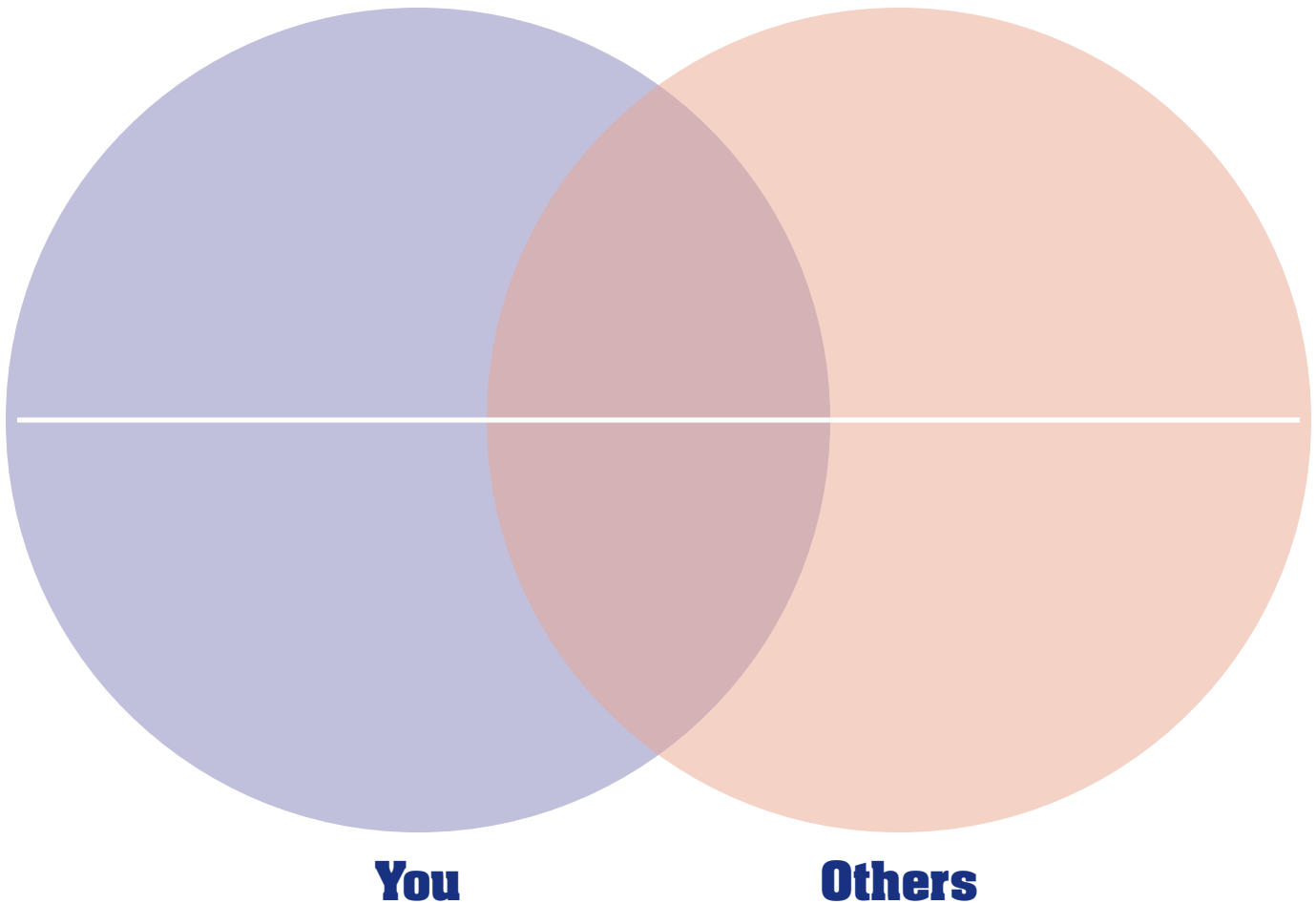
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## **Define Your Rights**

<b>Right</b>	<b>What does it mean? What does it entitle you to?</b>

## **Worksheet 2: Where Rights and Limitations Meet**

Write your rights in the top half of the left circle. Write the rights of others in the top half of the right circle. Describe the rights you and others share in the overlapping space the circles share. In the lower half of each circle write your limitations and the limitations of others in the corresponding circles. Any limitations that are shared should be written in the overlapping space between the circles.





# **Worksheet 3: Action Plan for Working with Youth and Young Adults to Create a Bill of Rights**

## **Collect the Constituents—Who Needs to be Part of the Conversation?**

.....  
**What are your intended objectives:**

- 1.** .....
- 2.** .....
- 3.** .....

**What will the outcomes be:**

- 1.** .....
- 2.** .....
- 3.** .....

<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>